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Fortunately, conditions are not so aggravated in America as in the British cities (where, by the way, the distressing situation cannot be attributed to immigrants), and, as the author suggests, the thorough physical examination of school children begun at once and followed up consistently may obviate the necessity for the state socialism that Alfred Mosely deplors and condones in the case of Great Britain.

It is worth while to call attention to the workmanship on the book. The chapters have sub-headings significant and interesting. For instance, Children's Ailments (Chapter VII), their running page headings and frequent use of italics in topical divisions, of indentation, numbering paragraphs, index, and other devices all serve to bring out the author's message.

WILLIAM H. ALLEN.

New York.

Hamilton, Angus. *Afghanistan*. Pp. xxi, 562. Price, \$5.00. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, Importers. London: William Heinemann, 1906.

The lack of a comprehensive study of Afghanistan and its conditions has been at length supplied by Angus Hamilton in his large volume recently issued, and imported by Charles Scribner's Sons. The work required two years to be spent in its preparation and the result is most satisfactory, as the book contains much information under historical, geographical, ethnographical, commercial and political groupings. The climate, country and towns are well described, the railroad approach is accurately and minutely dwelt upon, as are also the products and minerals, exports and imports. The author, by special permission, dedicates the volume to Lord Curzon, of Kedleston, "who, by the splendour of his gifts and the wisdom of his rule has left an indelible and memorable impression upon India."

The relations of Russia to Great Britain and Afghanistan, and all borderland encroachments, are plainly set forth. The situation of Afghanistan as a buffer state, an entrance to India, will probably lead, the author believes, to encounters in the future as it has in the past. Meanwhile, despite existing treaties, the author regards His Highness Habib Ullah, Amir of Afghanistan, as an uncertain quantity in the problem of Anglo-Afghan affairs.

The illustrations are numerous and interesting, a picture of Lord Curzon being the frontispiece. A map on a generous scale serves to elucidate the text.

Philadelphia.

LAURA BELL.

Hamilton, C. H. *A Treatise on the Law of Taxation by Special Assessments*. Pp. lxxv, 937. Price, \$7.50. Chicago: George I. Jones, 1907.

With the exception of the work of Mr. Welty, in 1886, in which he devoted two chapters to street improvements and assessments, and cited only one hundred and seventy cases, this is a pioneer work upon the subject of special assessments. The necessity for a work of this kind is found in the fact that street improvements have become a necessity, and experience shows that the

only way to successfully prosecute such work is to require abutting property owners to pay for the special benefit received.

The merit of a text book is:

1. Its thorough, concise and lucid exposition of the decisions of the courts of various states and the deductions of the legal principles underlying such decisions.

2. An index which enables one to find what he wants.

Mr. Hamilton has met these conditions and is to be congratulated especially upon the fact that he has furnished an index which enables one to know where to find the law bearing upon his subject. An examination of the cases shows that while an assessment is a tax in that it is an enforced contribution from the property owner for the public benefit, yet it is not a tax in the sense that it is a burden, since the property owner receives an equivalent in the shape of the increased value of his property. The overwhelming weight of authority is, therefore, to the effect that the word "tax" as used in our constitutions does not relate to special assessments, but that the legislature, in the exercise of its sovereign authority, has the right to authorize these special assessments for street improvements unless prohibited by the organic law.

So then, unless the legislature is prohibited from authorizing street improvements and requiring the abutting property owners to bear a portion of the expense upon the theory of special benefits, it has the right so to do.

An examination of the cases cited by the author and the principles deduced therefrom clearly shows that the right to assess abutting property owners for the special benefits which they receive by reason of permanent improvements in front of their property is thoroughly intrenched in American jurisprudence, and as to urban property, the "front foot" method is the best practical method by which these benefits may be ascertained. The state that adopts any other policy will find itself far behind in the march of municipal progress.

This book of Mr. Hamilton's is a meritorious one and deserves the careful attention of students of this branch of constitutional and municipal law.

JOSEPH A. McCULLOUGH.

Greenville, S. C.

Kelynack, T. N. (Ed.). *The Drink Problem in Its Medico-Sociological Aspects.* Pp. viii, 300. Price, \$2.50. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1907.

The above work is a contribution of the greatest value to the scientific study of the liquor problem. On account of the complexity of the effects of alcoholism in modern society, the plan of the work has been to have a specially qualified medical expert treat of each phase of the problem. The result is a book, which, while not homogeneous in character, has a unique value in that the opinions presented under each topic are those of a scientific expert.

The chapters range from "The Pathology of Alcoholism" to "Alcoholism and Legislation." The general trend of the conclusions reached by the